

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of the combination of subject matter recited in claims 2-5. Applicant would also like to thank the Examiner for indicating the acceptance of the drawings filed with the present application on April 2, 2004. Applicant would also like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119, as well as receipt of certified copies of each of the priority documents upon which Applicant's claim for foreign priority is based. Applicant would also like to thank the Examiner for previously acknowledging consideration of the references cited by Applicant on a PTO-1449 form which was submitted with an Information Disclosure Statement on July 2, 2004.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1 and 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over YAMAZAKI (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0081137). Claims 2-5 were objected-to as being dependent upon a rejected based claim, but were otherwise indicated to be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include all of the limitations of base and any intervening claims. In this regard, the outstanding Official Action indicates, at page 3, that "[t]he primary reasons for patentability of claims 2-5 are the specific natures of the reliability set forth in claims 2 and 3".

Upon entry of the present amendment, Applicant will have amended claims 1, 3-5 and 7-8. Applicant will have also cancelled claim 2 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 9-21 will have been added for consideration by the Examiner. Claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 11

are independent, and correspond to original independent claims 1, 7 and 8, each as amended to include features similar to the features originally recited in claims 2 and 3.

In particular, claim 1 will have been amended to include substantially all of the features previously recited in claim 2 (i.e., as a combination of claims 1 and 2). Claim 3 will have been amended to include substantially all of the features previously recited in claim 1 (i.e., as a combination of claims 1 and 3). Applicant notes that each of these combinations were indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Claim 4 will have been amended to depend from amended claim 1. Claim 5 will also have been amended to depend from amended claim 1. Applicant notes that each of claims 4 and 5 thus depend from a combination in claim 1 that was previously indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Claim 6 depends from amended claim 1. Claim 9 will have been added to depend from amended claim 3, and contains features similar to the features recited in claim 6. Applicant notes that each of claims 6 and 9 thus depend from combinations (i.e., in claims 1 and 3) that were previously indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that each of claims 1, 3-6 and 9 includes a combination of features previously indicated as allowable by the Examiner.

Claim 7 will have been amended to include the features previously recited in claim 2 (i.e., as a combination of claims 7 and 2). Claim 10 will have been added to recite a combination of features similar to the features previously

recited in claims 7 and 3 (i.e., as a combination of claims 7 and 3). Applicant submits that each of claims 7 and 10 thus recite features similar to a combination that was previously indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Claim 8 will have been amended to include the features previously recited in claim 2 (i.e., as a combination of claims 8 and 2). Claim 11 will have been added to recite a combination of features similar to the features previously recited in claims 8 and 3 (i.e., as a combination of claims 8 and 3). Applicant submits that each of claims 8 and 11 thus recite features similar to a combination that was previously indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Claim 12 will have been added to depend from amended claim 3. Claim 13 will also have been added to depend from amended claim 3. Applicant notes that each of claims 12-13 recite features similar to the features of claims 4 and 5, and further depends from a combination in claim 3 that was previously indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Claim 14 will have been added to depend from amended claim 7. Claim 15 will also have been added to depend from amended claim 7. Claim 16 will have been added to depend from amended claim 8. Claim 17 will also have been added to depend from amended claim 8. Claim 18 will have been added to depend from new claim 10. Claim 19 will also have been added to depend from new claim 10. Claim 20 will have been added to depend from new claim 11. Claim 21 will also have been added to depend from new claim 11. Applicant notes that each of claims 14-21 recite features similar to the features of claims 4 and 5, and further depend from a combination in claims 7, 8, 10 or 11 that is

similar to a combination that was previously indicated as allowable in the outstanding Official Action.

Applicant submits that the herein-contained amendments and new claims should not be taken as an indication of Applicant's acquiescence with the propriety of the outstanding rejection and objection. In this regard, Applicant submits that substantive differences exist between the teachings of YAMAZAKI and the invention recited in Applicant's claims. Nevertheless, Applicant has amended the claims and presented new claims in order to obtain early allowance of claims in the present application.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding rejection and objection, at least because each of the claims now pending recites a combination of features similar to a combination of features previously found to be allowable by the Examiner.

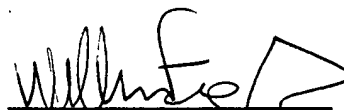
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance, and believes that he has now done so. Applicant has amended existing claims and added new claims to recite combinations of features similar to combinations of features previously found to be allowable by the Examiner.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,
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